adapted to detect traces of solid particles of said substance to be detected. Pending claims 3 and 4 relate to a detection by a biosensor in particular by the smell of the traces of solid substance. Pending claim 5 relates to a detection by chemical analysis.

For the foregoing reasons, claims 1-3, 5-10 and 15 are not anticipated by EP '057.

Claims 4 and 11-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over EP '057 in view of U.S. Patent 6,642,513 to Jenkins et al. Applicants traverse this rejection and request reconsideration thereof.

It is clear from figures 4 and 5 of Jenkins et al. that the Jenkins et al. trapping material 24 is a flat non-woven felt fabric made of high temperature polyamide fiber (see also column 4, lines 48-50). The thickness "t" of this trap 24 is very thin since it is less than 3mm and preferably in the range of proximately 1-2 mm (see column 4, lines 50-52). The principle of such a flat felt trap is entirely different from that of the present invention as shown in figures 1, 2 and 2A in particular. Such a structure is critical in Jenkins et al. since it is emphasized that the low thermal inertia allows the trap 24 to be heated rapidly to temperatures exceeding 200°C, which is a temperature where most contrabands of interest evaporate rapidly (see column 4, lines 60-63). Accordingly, the Jenkins et al. patent is also essentially relating to a heating of the contrabands to evaporate them rapidly. This technical feature is not a requirement in the invention method as claimed. In view of this, it is believed that the EP'057 alone or even combined with Jenkins e al. does not render the invention as claimed obvious for one skilled in the art.

The present invention clearly would not have been obvious over such a prior

art as it solves a new technical problem which is set forth in the specification from page 1, line 24 to page 2, line 11. Indeed, the invention provides a procedure which is reliable and reproducible, easy to implement, and low in cost, while making it possible in a minimum amount of time to process as many loads as it is deemed necessary to subject to inspection, because they might contain substance to be detected just by detecting solid particles and not requiring the vaporization of the contrabands substances. In view of this, it is believed that the invention as claimed is patentable over the prior art relied upon by the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-15 are requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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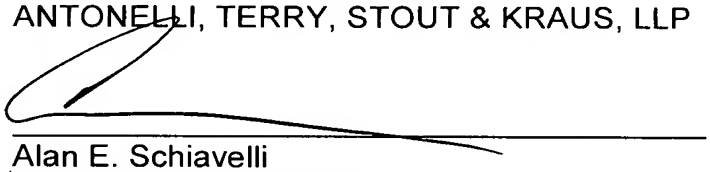

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